

REMARKS

This Amendment responds to the Office Action dated February 27, 2006 in which the Examiner rejected claims 14 and 17-21 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and rejected claims 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging the Information Disclosure Statement filed April 23, 2003. However, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner acknowledge the Information Disclosure Statement filed September 12, 2002 citing Japanese Examination Report issued August 13, 2002 and including a copy of JP 9-141624.

As indicated above, claim 14 has been amended to make explicit what is implicit in the claims. The amendment is unrelated to a statutory requirement for patentability.

Claim 14 claims a method for pressing a ceramic stacked layer structure, comprising the steps of laterally holding sidewalls of a die at a predetermined position on a die base using a plurality of thrust mechanisms. The die has a bottom plate and the sidewalls form a recess for receiving the ceramic layered structure. The ceramic layered structure is vertically pressed in the recess between the bottom plate and a top die and while lateral force is applied via the plurality of thrust mechanisms on outer faces of the sidewalls in horizontal directions toward the recess.

Through the method of the claimed invention, laterally holding sidewalls of a die at a predetermined position using a plurality of thrust mechanisms and vertically pressing a ceramic layered structure while applying the lateral force via the thrust mechanism as claimed in claim 14, the claimed invention provides a method of

pressing a ceramic stacked layer to prevent the layered structure from expanding in a horizontal direction when pressed. The prior art does not show, teach or suggest the invention as claimed in claim 14.

Claims 14 and 17-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Mori et al.* (U.S. Patent 5,370,760).

Mori et al. appears to disclose a method of manufacturing a multilayer ceramic electronic component. (Column 1, lines 7-8). Referring to FIG. 1, a ceramic laminate 13 is first prepared by stacking a plurality of ceramic green sheets including those provided with conductor films 12 which are formed to be distributed on central portions along surface directions thereof. On the other hand, also prepared is a die assembly 18 including an upper punch 14 which comes into contact with a first major surface of the ceramic laminate 13, and a base 17 including a frame 15 which encloses the peripheries of the upper punch 14 and the ceramic laminate 13 and a base plate 16 which comes into contact with a second major surface of the ceramic laminate 13 in a manner opposite to the upper punch 14. While the frame 15 and the base 16 forming the base 17 are separable from each other in the die assembly 18 according to this embodiment, the frame 15 and the base plate 16 may be mechanically integrated with each other. The feature of this embodiment resides in the structure of the upper punch 14. This upper punch 14 is divided into an outer peripheral portion 19 which comes into contact with peripheral edge portions of the first major surface of the ceramic laminate 13 and a body portion 20 which comes into contact with a central portion of the first major surface, so that these portions separately press the ceramic laminate 13. (Column 4, lines 32-56).

Thus, *Mori et al.* merely discloses an upper punch 14 divided into outer peripheral portions 19 which come into contact with peripheral edge portions of a ceramic laminate 13 and a body portion 20 which comes into contact with a central portion of the ceramic laminate 13. Nothing in *Mori et al.* shows, teaches or suggests a) laterally holding sidewalls of a die at a predetermined position using a plurality of thrust mechanisms or b) vertically pressing the ceramic layered structure while applying lateral force in horizontal directions to the sidewalls as claimed in claim 14. Rather, *Mori et al.* merely discloses an upper punch 14 divided into outer peripheral portion 19 and body portion 20.

Additionally, *Mori et al.* merely discloses vertically pressing the ceramic portion. Nothing in *Mori et al.* shows, teaches or suggests laterally holding sidewalls of a die using thrust mechanisms in a horizontal direction as claimed in claim 14. Rather, the frame portion 15 of *Mori et al.* is not disclosed as being held at a predetermined position or applied with a lateral force in a horizontal direction toward a recess as claimed in claim 14.

Since nothing in *Mori et al.* shows, teaches or suggests laterally holding sidewalls of a die at a predetermined position and vertically pressing a ceramic layer while applying lateral force on outer faces of the sidewalls in a horizontal direction toward a recess as claimed in claim 14, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraws the rejection to claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

Claims 17-21 depend from claim 14 and recite additional features. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 17-21 would not have been anticipated by *Mori et al.* within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §102(b) at least for the reasons as set forth above.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraws the rejection to claims 17-21 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

Claims 15-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over *Mori et al.*

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103. The claims have been reviewed in light of the Office Action, and for reasons which will be set forth below, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraws the rejection to the claims and allows the claims to issue.

As discussed above, since nothing in *Mori et al.* shows, teaches or suggests the primary features as claimed in claim 14, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims would not be obvious over *Mori et al.* Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraws the rejection to claims 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Thus, it now appears that the application is in condition for reconsideration and allowance. Reconsideration and allowance at an early date are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner find that the application is not now in condition for allowance, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner enters this Amendment for purposes of appeal.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact, by telephone, the Applicant's undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed within the currently set shortened statutory period, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such extension of time may be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

In the event that any additional fees are due with this paper, please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

Respectfully submitted,

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL PC

Date: June 9, 2006

By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ellen Marcie Emas', written over a horizontal line.

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